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City Attorney Zach Klein Testifies Against Bill that Would Give Convicted Domestic Abusers Access to Concealed Weapons

City Attorney Klein says Gun Violence Expansion Act would lead to more domestic violence-related homicides and make it harder for police to do their job

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein submitted testimony to the Ohio House Government Oversight Committee in opposition to the Gun Violence Expansion Act, House Bill 51, legislation that would expand free access to firearms in Ohio, including for individuals convicted of certain domestic violence offenses, and make it harder for police to enforce laws that are already on the books.

“As City Attorney, my priority is public safety, and this bill is a step in the wrong direction that makes us all less safe. It will put more guns in the hands of violent domestic abusers to use to torment their victims and make it harder for law enforcement to work together to crack down on the worst of the worst criminals,” said Columbus City Attorney Klein. **“The chaos and havoc of gun violence in our city is exacerbated by really bad laws like this one. Passing laws like HB 51 only makes gun violence worse. Anyone who cares about public safety and addressing the scourge of gun crimes and domestic violence should be concerned about HB 51.”**

HB 51 proposes to amend Ohio’s definition of who is allowed to carry a concealed weapon by removing federal disqualifying language. This means that only individuals who are prohibited from possessing a firearm under state law would be barred from permitless concealed carry protections. So individuals convicted of a misdemeanor act of domestic violence would be allowed under Ohio law to carry a concealed weapon without a permit.

Under the proposal, local law enforcement would be prohibited from working with federal entities on enforcement of firearms laws, a move that would limit the ability of police to get illegal guns off the streets and prosecute violent criminals.

City Attorney Klein also noted the striking similarity of HB 51’s draft language to nullification arguments used by slave states in the in the years preceding the Civil War.

In his testimony, City Attorney Klein wrote:

“HB 51 is an unconstitutional statute that will allow individuals who have been convicted of domestic violence to take advantage of the State’s permitless concealed carry law. It will destroy the ability of law enforcement agencies to work with their federal counterparts. It will open the State, its municipalities, and all of their employees up to endless litigation with the real threat of damages and attorneys’ fees. Finally, HB 51 embraces the discredited nullification language used by South Carolina and other states during the antebellum era. This terrible bill should be rejected.”

[City Attorney Klein’s full testimony is attached.](#)

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